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# FARM PAPER LETTER

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Department of  
Agriculture

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Information

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## USDA FORUM ON FARM PRODUCTS

Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block will hold a "challenge forum" to find new uses and new markets for farm products at USDA's Administration Building in Washington, D.C., Oct. 11 and 12.

"USDA's leadership in the area of new products and scientific research is well established," Block said. "Finding new uses for farm products is a priority at USDA and it is appropriate that we 'challenge' the private sector to join with us in exploring new directions for farm products and new markets."

"This forum will offer an excellent opportunity for executives from government, industry and agricultural associations to meet and exchange ideas," Block said.

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**WHEAT DEMAND HIGH** The 1984 U.S. wheat crop will be the third largest on record, at 2.57 billion bushels. Larger world demand, especially Soviet, should push disappearance to an all-time high. The rice crop is forecast 37 percent more than last year.

September corn crop prospects were lowered because of drought in some areas. However, production will still be well above last year's. For soybeans, larger-than-expected stocks have contributed to the weak prices. Cotton yields are forecast to hit a record 615 pounds an acre, 25 pounds above the previous record, and production is estimated at 13.3 million bales.

Even though meat production typically expands this time of year, it may decline from the large output of a year ago. The current downswing in hog production may offset seasonal increases in beef. In fact, meat production during October and November could be smaller than a year ago, and could remain so through the winter.

Global milk production is expected to drop in 1984 and 1985 because of new supply controls introduced by major producers, especially the United States and the European Community. Milk production in 37 major producing countries is expected to decline about 0.2 percent in 1984, following increases of 2 and 4 percent in 1982 and 1983.

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**WORTH WATCHING:** This month's Agricultural Outlook contains a special article on Soviet grain purchases from the United States. The U.S. Government has approved purchases of up to 22 million tons of grain for the agreement year beginning October 1, 1984.

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**AG COMMUNICATIONS** Texas A&M University has announced openings for five ag  
**JOB OPENINGS** communications positions--two in the broadcasting area, one  
audiovisuals specialist, one graphic artist and one research  
publications editor.

Don Springer, head of Texas A&M's Agricultural Communications Department, says applications will be accepted immediately for all five positions and until the positions have been filled. But they're anxious to get the jobs filled.

For more details about the positions and for submitting applications, resumes, transcripts, etc., contact Don M. Springer, Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Communications, 229 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-2112. Or call (409) 845-2211, or send message via Dialcom electronic mailbox AGS2260. (Inside Information)

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**PENCIL MIGHTIER** Most U.S. executives--despite word processing, electronic  
**THAN COMPUTER?** mail and other modern office equipment--are still "pencil  
pushers" when they write business letters, memos and reports,  
according to a new nationwide survey of 218 executives conducted by  
Communispond, Inc., management consultants to business communication.

Although it's tedious work, 89 percent of the respondents ranked the "pad and pencil" method far ahead of dictation (10 percent) and computers (1 percent).

The survey also found that nearly 80 percent of the executives reported writing "more or just as many" pieces of correspondence in 1984 as they did in 1983. One pencil pusher claimed he wrote "over 50" per week.

The survey, covering small, medium and large companies, included a cross section of mid and upper management in the accounting, marketing, finance, sales, research and legal areas. (Inside Information)

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**MEAT SUPPLIES** Greater red meat supplies than earlier anticipated,  
**REMAIN LARGE** combined with further gains expected in poultry, will  
result in 1985 per capita meat supplies being only modestly  
below those in 1984. The latest Hogs and Pigs report indicates slightly larger  
pork production than previously expected. At the same time, continued  
inadequate forage and some producers' financial problems have prompted higher  
estimates of beef cow slaughter. Favorable returns to broiler producers over  
the past year have encouraged sharply expanded production through at least  
first-half 1985.

Although meat supplies remain large, the income of most feeder animal producers is expected to rise next year. Lower feed costs will probably provide the biggest boost. In addition, revenue may increase as livestock prices strengthen, supported by continued economic growth.

Broiler producers may see lower returns as production rises and prices decline somewhat. However, returns will remain positive; costs of production for poultry are also forecast to decline as feed costs fall and rises in nonfeed costs continue modest. (Livestock and Poultry)

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**HIGH-SPEED MOVIES MAY  
SLOW SOYBEAN LOSSES**

A U.S. Department of Agriculture researcher says high-speed movies of soybean harvesting may help save farmers millions of dollars on one of the nation's top crops.

John W. Hummel, an agricultural engineer for USDA's Agricultural Research Service, says the films are helping USDA develop a new harvesting method that could cut by half the soybeans lost using traditional methods. This could reap some \$246 million in savings, based on last year's soybean harvest, Hummel says.

With the present combine system, V-shaped teeth on sickle bars move rapidly back and forth to cut the soybean stalks.

"The problem is," says Hummel, "that the teeth jar loose too many beans. They fall to the ground and are lost."

Hummel says this happens because soybeans -- unlike other small grain crops typically harvested by combines -- have large pods that grow along the entire stalk. When jarred or shaken, the pods shatter and lose beans.

"About 4 percent of last year's 1.6 billion bushel soybean crop fell to the ground and was left there. We're trying to trim the loss to 2 percent," Hummel said.

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**INCREASE FORESEEN  
IN U.S. COTTON CROP**

The 1984 U.S. cotton crop is forecast at 12.6 million bales, based on August 1 conditions. Chances are two out of three that production will range from 11.5 to 13.7 million bales, up from 7.8 million in 1983. Planted acreage is estimated at 11 million, only 3.1 million more than last year when 4.1 million more acres were idled under government programs. Harvested acreage in 1984 is estimated at 10.4 million and yields may average 583 pounds per harvested acre. The record average yield of 590 pounds was achieved in 1982.

U.S. 1984/85 cotton exports are forecast at 5.7 million bales, down from 6.8 million during 1983/84. The forecast difference between foreign production and consumption in 1984/85 is only 1.4 million bales. However, China's stocks are expected to rise nearly 3 million bales, and stocks in other foreign countries will probably rise from very low 1983/84 levels.

Second quarter wool mill use equaled 40 million pounds, and use of apparel wool was the highest since 1973. Mill use for 1984 is expected to total 155 million pounds, 12 percent higher than in 1983. Rising incomes are boosting demand for quality apparel while the strong dollar is cutting the import price of foreign wool. Over one-half of the wool used in U.S. is imported, and second quarter dutiable raw wool imports were the highest since 1970. (Cotton and Wool Outlook and Situation Report)

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**POTATO PRODUCTION** Potato production in 1983 for all four seasons in the U.S. totaled 334 million cwt. (15.1 million metric tons), 6 percent less than in 1982, and 2 percent below 1981 output. Harvested area was 1.24 million acres (503 thousand hectares), 2 percent less than 1982, but 1 percent above 1981. The 1983 average yield was 269 cwt. per acre, down from the record high of 280 cwt. set in 1982.

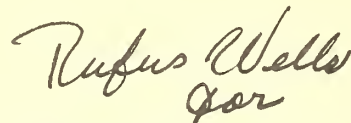
Potatoes were valued at \$1.94 billion, a gain of 24 percent from last year and 6 percent above the 1981 crop. The average price of \$5.82 per cwt. was \$1.37 more than last year and \$.40 above the 1981 price.

The quantity sold, at 303 million cwt. was down 4 percent from 1982 and 2 percent below 1981. However, value of sales at \$1.76 billion gained 25 percent from last year and 6 percent above 1981. Processors bought 51 percent of the potatoes produced in 1983; fresh market (table stock) accounted for 33 percent; while 7 percent was sold for seed and livestock feed. Potatoes used on farms where grown, lost through shrinkage and other losses accounted for the remaining 9 percent.

Sweetpotato production totaled 12.1 million cwt. (548 thousand metric tons) in 1983, down 19 percent from 1982, and 6 percent below 1981. Area harvested at 102 thousand acres (41.4 thousand hectares) declined 11 percent while yields averaging 118 cwt. per acre were 9 percent below 1982. The 1983 value of production at \$165 million jumped 39 percent from 1982. The average price of 13.60 per cwt. compares with \$8.03 in 1982.

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**ABOUT YOU** Editorial changes at Farm Journal: Clair Urbain has been named  
....'N ME machinery and chemicals editor. Elizabeth Curry Williams  
formerly with Pro Farmer, joins Farm Journal as money management  
editor. She'll be based in Ames, Iowa; Suzanne Halas formerly of Pennsylvania  
Farmer, becomes associate editor, crops; Paula Mohr, named associate editor,  
dairy.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rufus Wells" with a stylized flourish underneath.

Clay Napier  
Editor, FARM PAPER LETTER